



Rep. Roger Bush

2000 SESSION OUTLOOK



Committees:

- Financial Institutions and Insurance, vice chair
- Capital Budget
- Technology, Telecommunications and Energy

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<http://access.wa.gov>

Dear Friends:

Once again the Legislature is in session. Our first day was Jan. 10, and we certainly have a full plate. I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know about the major issues we're covering this year.

Initiative 695 is number one on our agenda. I-695 reduced the state portion of the car license tax to \$30. In addition, voter approval is now required for all tax and fee hikes. The resulting reduction in revenue presents a major challenge to state and local governments — but I believe it's a good kind of challenge. Governments on all levels are being put on a diet. They'll have to be much more efficient and much less tolerant of wasteful spending.

Pierce County transportation projects did take a hit from I-695 — the 2nd District alone lost about \$32 million in road improvements. But, as in past years, I am working very hard on restoring those funds. We are a fast-growing county, and we need road expansions and repairs to ease gridlock and congestion. I'm also fighting for public safety and public health funding.

Other issues in this newsletter include: health insurance, crime, consumer privacy and education.

I hope this information helps you understand the 2000 session better. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I'm here to serve you!

Sincerely,

Roger Bush
State Representative
2nd District

Goals for the session:

- Control taxes
- Make government serve the people
- Improve transportation

INSIDE:

- ➔ health insurance
- ➔ crime
- ➔ consumer privacy
- ➔ education

2nd District

Rep. Roger Bush • 2nd District

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AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM GOVERNMENT

I-695 has two concrete consequences: It will reduce the state portion of the license tax to \$30 (you'll still have to pay any local fees that are added to the car tax), and it requires all tax hike proposals to go to a vote of the people. Beyond that, I-695 could — if implemented properly — change the way government does business. I believe we should respond to I-695 by combing through every agency budget, cutting all unnecessary items and making government as efficient and streamlined as possible. Some have reacted to I-695 by hinting that voters will be punished and essential services will be severely cut. But that response is neither acceptable nor appropriate. We can — and must — make I-695 work.

The initiative did cut funding for many essential services. But I believe we can continue to fund those services by cutting waste elsewhere. Here are my funding priorities:

- **Keeping our community safe**

Public safety is my top priority. Citizens must feel safe in their homes, on their streets and in their communities. If you and your family don't feel protected from harm, not much else matters. I am working with other legislators to safeguard funding for police, fire protection and the courts.

- **Improving transportation**

Once I-695 passed, funding for key 2nd District road projects was revoked. So it's back to the drawing board, and I'm spending a lot of time this session working to get as many transportation dollars as possible restored to our region. Those of you who've been stuck in traffic on the highway and on streets like Pacific and Meridian (not to mention I-5 and other major freeways) would probably agree that road improvements are not just an option — they're a necessity.



In an effort to relieve traffic congestion, I have introduced a bill to open HOV lanes to all traffic in off-peak hours.

- **Protecting public health**

Another major concern is funding for public health services — such as immunizations — for low-income children. Other services such as detecting e-coli, food testing and water inspections must also be maintained. Public health should be a priority as state and local governments adjust their budgets to fit I-695.

- **Controlling taxes & making government work**

Now that I-695 is law, voters get to decide on every tax hike proposal. Some Democratic legislators have already suggested sending tax increases to the voters, but I am against that tactic. I am also against using too much of the state emergency reserve to make up for I-695, which is what Gov. Locke proposes in his 2000 budget.

Instead of fighting the changes required by I-695, we should embrace them. We should use this as an opportunity to make government accountable for every tax dollar it spends. If we take a good hard look at every state agency budget, I believe we can find many ways to save money while delivering government services more efficiently.

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OTHER ISSUES

• Quality education

As a school teacher, I'm very concerned about the quality of education our children receive. Quality education is about far more than money — it's also about accountability. That's why I support testing new teachers, to make sure every teacher who enters the classroom is ready for the job. And I'm fully behind efforts to make our schools safer — for example, by giving teachers the right to remove disruptive students.

Higher education is also very important to Pierce County residents. Last year I helped secure funding for our local community and technical colleges as well as the University of Washington Tacoma branch. I'm continuing to work on behalf of our fine local institutions.



Rep. Bush with his 5th-grade class from Naches Trail Elementary.

• Crime

Although the overall crime rate is down, there are still some areas where we need to focus so law-abiding citizens are safer. For example, Pierce County has the highest rate of methamphetamine ("meth") crimes in the state. Meth is easy to produce, and very dangerous — the ingredients used to make it frequently explode. Meth labs put all citizens — especially children and seniors — at risk. This year I'm again supporting legislation to increase penalties for meth production.

• Health care

Pierce County is one of 32 counties in the state where people can no longer buy their own insurance plans. Thanks to excessive government regulations, insurance carriers have been driven out of the market and monthly premiums have skyrocketed. If we don't reform the system, there are some people in the state who will try to take advantage of the crisis and push government-run health care on the people of Washington.

Everyone in the state should have **access** to affordable insurance — and above all, consumers should have **choice**. Whether you want an inexpensive bare-bones plan or a more costly benefit-rich plan, you should have that option. Government should not stand in the way.

Also this year, we will pass a Patients' Bill of Rights to give people more consumer protections in dealing with their managed care plans.

• Privacy

In our increasingly technological age, information is getting easier and easier to access. But many people are concerned that their private information — bank accounts, medical history, etc. — may not be so private. As a member of the state Attorney General's work group on consumer privacy, I'm working on ways to protect people's private information. At the same time, the state shouldn't do anything to hurt businesses' ability to serve customers. I would favor a privacy law that gives consumers the final say on when, how or if anyone may share or sell their private information.

Join me for town hall meetings!

Saturday, January 29th

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Graham Library
9202 224th E.

1:00 - 2:30 p.m. at Parkland-Spanaway Library
13718 Pacific Ave. S.

HOUSE REPUBLICAN AGENDA • 2000 SESSION



“Controlling Taxes and Making Government Work!”

- 1. Make government serve the people** by changing the way government works.
- 2. Provide quality education** by letting parents choose, teachers teach, and children learn.
- 3. Improve transportation** by reducing traffic congestion and improving safety.
- 4. Keep neighborhoods and communities safe** by protecting local police and fire safety.